

VIRTUAL BOOK TO TEACH 5TH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES ALIGNED WITH NORTH
CAROLINA STANDARDS

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by

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Abstract

I started this project to solve a problem I faced during my first year of teaching Social Studies to 5th graders. I struggled trying to find the content I needed to help my students and I also found that many of my ELLs did not have the tools to understand complex words related to the class content. Accordingly, I saw that they were often discouraged and unmotivated. These challenges led me to decide to put as many resources as possible together in the same place, and that led me to the idea for a virtual book.

This innovative educational project seeks to engage ELLS and provide them with the tools that will allow them to learn the English language in a Social Studies class. The interactive virtual book will act as a dynamic tool that will support them in the learning process. It is intended for 5th grade students attending North Carolina Schools and is aligned with the standards for Social Studies. A prototype of the product is created, and it is intended to be used in class and to be analyzed, evaluated and redesigned to provide a high-quality resource.

This thesis project consists of developing a virtual book as a pedagogical mediation that will enable fifth graders to strengthen their knowledge of the four English language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) and have access to study material related to social studies that is in English designed for ELLs, since it was possible to deduce through my classes that several students lacked motivation and had the low academic performance. They present in the evaluative processes with shortcomings related to the learning and application of English language skills, and many of these weaknesses allude to the lack of bibliographic material the students have to study and work to progress in their English language skills.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to God for being present in my life, for the blessings that he has poured out on me and for all the goals that he has allowed me to fulfill. I also dedicate this thesis to all the people who always believed in my abilities and have supported, and trusted me.

To my wife and children for helping me make this dream become true. To my parents, siblings and relatives, because there is not a day in which they are not present in my thoughts. The greatest fortune I have is to have them all, and the most valuable treasure they have taught me such as values that were instilled in me and thanks to which, I am the person who encourages the change in the course of the lives of my students to make a better tomorrow.

To my students, who are the reason for my teaching, allowing me to overcome the challenges that each day brings.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: Overview

This research and work come from my teaching experience and highlights a problem that I have seen since I started teaching Social Studies to ELLs and newcomers. Because these students' English levels are low and taking into account their limited vocabulary and the lack of resources that allow them to understand the topics and standards for fifth grade in North Carolina, special care must be taken. The main problem is that there are not many resources aligned that are available in both languages (English - Spanish) with similar content. This project intends not only to help ELLs, but also the native-speaking students who are learning Spanish in their Dual Language program. That is when I decided to implement the idea of developing a text in English and Spanish with the aligned content according to the guidelines and curricular standards in the area of Social Studies for fifth grade in North Carolina.

Although there are texts in English for the teaching of Social Studies, they bring approaches that are not in accordance with those required to teach ELLs following North Carolina standards. That is the reason why it is necessary to gather material from many resources just to teach one topic, which makes the work of the teacher and the student more demanding. Many ELLs have not been exposed to any content related to the history of the United States, which makes the process even more difficult to understand. The content is decontextualized for the students who finally learn about problems, situations, and places that they are not very familiar with. Since it is necessary for the teacher to give the ELLs additional input, the intention of this virtual notebook is to help students learn not only Social Studies content but also the language in context. Another purpose of this thesis work is to help students with the transition process from elementary school to middle school, taking into account that the Dual Language

program only goes up to fifth grade and that starting in the sixth grade, they will have to be in classes with monolingual, native-speaking students.

After asking other educators, I found that one of the main problems the students face a lack of vocabulary in English; therefore, their critical-formative process cannot be fully carried out. Since being critical is one of the abilities Social Studies helps the students with. It is when pedagogical tools like the Virtual Book to Teach 5th Grade Social Studies Aligned with North Carolina Standards are put in the hands of students to fill the gaps in their language acquisition and to ensure that the learning is taking place. It is not only a communication problem that the students face, it is more about what, and how Social Studies is taught to the ELL population

Teaching students about the national territory and those who inhabit it, its geographical features, its mountain ranges, the diversity of ethnic groups, and the socio-political aspects in English is what is intended to be disseminated with this developing Virtual Book to Teach 5th Grade Social Studies Aligned with North Carolina Standards. It is necessary to take a closer look at the 5th grade standards in North Carolina to have a real and effective approach and applicability within the English language, favoring the meaningful learning of the language and Social Studies content through a virtual book.

The idea of a virtual book came up when I tried to gather different resources from several web pages to plan one of my classes. I realized that there were so many tabs open that I just could not remember the order in which I should present the topic. I also noticed that many students were confused because the layout of each page was different and the language barrier was evident. Since learning, understanding, and being able to communicate in a second language is a must in this changing century; I believed that learning the new language through the digital channel mixed with in-person instruction would be the perfect match.

This virtual book will use the “5 E’s” instructional model encompassing the phases Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate, to help students move through in phases as they learn the language and content (San Diego County Office of Education 2021). The virtual book will be structured by units and aligned with North Carolina standards. One of the most remarkable features of the virtual book is the amount of visual content (pictures, graphs) to help students understand better no matter their level of literacy and language proficiency. Since knowing vocabulary words is fundamental to reading comprehension, the virtual book will have a key vocabulary section before each reading. Since one of the intentions is to help students learn and communicate verbally with peers, academic English will be seen in the readings and videos. To ensure mastery of words and concepts, meanings and concepts will be explained with student-friendly definitions, including examples of how they are used and engaging student activities to develop mastery. The content will be available in both languages English and Spanish. The same content that the students see in English will be available in Spanish to make sure not only ELL students are learning but also native English speakers.

This virtual book affords teachers the opportunity to add content that they may find useful for their classes. With this option, the number of extra resources will make the class more teacher-friendly. Videos can be also linked to allow the students the opportunity to have a more real-life experience. Colorful backgrounds depending on the topic will be also included. This virtual book will give educators the freedom to modify it to meet the needs of their students.

It is true that learning English as a Second Language has always been very challenging because in many cases students do not feel motivated to learn the language. It is in the educator’s hands to apply new and effective techniques such as multi-media, e-learning, audio, and visual tools to arise students’ curiosity and interest. (Long, Ming & Chen 2013). For that reason, the

development and uses of technology have influenced and changed the perspective of those willing to learn a new language. It is hoped then, that the interaction between students and the technology may increase the levels of willingness towards learning the language.

In summary, this project was carried out due to the shortcomings that we find in the texts for the teaching of Social Studies to ELLs in the fifth grade in North Carolina schools. This problem has persisted within the Dual Language program, not only for the ELLs but also for the native English students that are striving to become fluent in the Spanish language. There has been a general lack of cohesive progress regarding the teaching of social studies in our country, including its geography, socio-cultural topics, the economic environment, and its history, and for this reason, we need to address gaps in knowledge from previous grades.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Today, it is fundamental to teach and provide information using connection between content and technology. Since technology is part of our daily life, it is important to use it to fulfill and complement, not only our teaching, but also learning; in this case, our ELLs will be able to take advantage of language learning through a content area like social studies. Every concept acquired by the student in the classroom should have applicability in life to ensure enrichment of knowledge; however, the teaching-learning process has to be meaningful.

Technological Tools

Blackwell and Yost (2013) stated that technology use in the classroom is very beneficial in helping the students understand and absorb what they are being taught. For instance, Dolati and Richards (2010) explained that when learning a language, the visual part plays an important role. Since many ELLs are visual learners, projection screens connected to computers could be put in classrooms to let them see their notes as opposed to simply sitting down and listening to the instructor teach. Gardner (1983) claimed that people have eight independent ways of processing information, which are: Verbal–Linguistic (Word Smart), Logical-Mathematical (Logic Smart), Visual-Spatial (Picture Smart), Auditory–Musical (Music Smart), Bodily-Kinesthetic (Body Smart), Interpersonal (People Smart), Intrapersonal (Self Smart), Naturalistic (Nature Smart). The human brain is extremely complex, and all of these types of “smarts” work together. This virtual notebook will use Gardner’s theory to develop easy-to-understand lessons. Fleming (1987), in his VARK model of learning regarding the visual learning style, suggested

that the visual, aural, reading, writing, and kinesthetic sensory modalities could be implemented to help educators understand how students work. It is necessary to know how our students learn to ensure they feel motivated. They prefer to learn using visual representations, such as graphs, posters, maps, displays, and in the case of language acquisition, these are great tools. As Halwani (2017) referred to in her essay, visual aids used in the classroom are essential for ELLs because they provide a different form of explanation, and provide the students with information that they may not have understood if it was presented to them in written or spoken form.

To motivate and keep the students motivated and willing to read, Gura (2014) explained that digital books are a very useful tool that helps at the moment of teaching. Students need to learn how to read, not only words, but also images to provide a short form of book talk. User-friendly tools allow students to access content with just one click. They can access and use photographs, music, and text to communicate what they have understood and what they want others to know about any given topic. Jalongo (2015) detailed several strategies that can be used with students to encourage them to learn and practice vocabulary and to make connections between actions and oral language. One of those strategies is “Coaching Parents to Become Reading Partners at Home” (Jalongo 2015 p. 15), which is one of those supporting strategies that will make a difference in the student’s learning and language acquisition. A factor that can affect students’ school progress is educational beliefs, and parents’ own literacy practices among others. It is necessary then to build families’ confidence by allowing them to participate in their children’s learning process. Learning a new language is a matter of time, effort, and real context exposure.

However, blogs can help, not only ELL students, but also their families to share and connect to different stories especially during the so-called “silent period” (Krashen, 1982), which

can last from a few days to months. De Ramirez (2009) asserted that as the student gets acclimated to a new school, a new language, a new culture, and a new country, the use of blogs, and the tools that allow ELLs to make comments on other students' work while receiving comments about their own writing are beneficial tools in promoting engagement.

For many ELLs, it is easier to communicate in writing rather than speaking. To emphasize her point of view, virtual books give teachers a chance to explore and create blogs. De Ramirez (2009) also stated that the use of podcasts is a great way to expose ELLs to different accents, a variety of registers, and access to colloquial and formal expressions. De Ramirez (2009) explained how important and useful this resource can be. Teachers can create a YouTube channel, but it is important to talk to students about ways in which to be safe in using this powerful Web tool. It is helpful to go over these recommendations with students and parents before student work is posted to a video-sharing Web site.

According to Tomlinson (2008), in order to emphasize and understand the challenges ELLs face, the materials for those learners no matter their level of proficiency, have to provide exposure to authentic use of English through written, spoken, and visual texts that engage the learners cognitively. If the student's brain and desire to learn are not stimulated, there is very little chance that the materials and tools used provide a durable language acquisition at all (Tomlinson, 2008).

Halwani (2017) believed that to ensure a successful scaffolded learning process, visual aids and multimedia have to be implemented. Those tools are usually used as scaffolding for the students in different ways and at different levels. Staden (2011) affirmed that the value of any visual material in the learning process of a language is invaluable and even more at the moment of teaching content areas vocabulary. In areas such as social studies, ELA, reading, art, math,

and science can be very useful. Staden (2011) also affirmed that the role of visual aids and how they are used on a daily basis can engage and assure higher thinking structures that will lead the student to have a more structured language acquisition and the development of the English as a second language can take place in a more natural way.

When various technologies were first emerging in the early '90s, Cunningham (1991) initialized several techniques that can be implemented in the classroom using and adapting technological tools. Cunningham (1991) stated that a very successful one is the use of slides, which is something my virtual book provides. Although creating slide shows take time, they are most rewarding for students. They provide an extremely effective visual aid in ESL classrooms.

Through the use of images, ELLs may explore authentic daily situations about which students can talk, interact, speculate and draw their own conclusions. More recently, Ferlazzo and Sypnieski (2018) expressed how the use of technologies has changed the teaching-learning style. Vocabulary, language and organizational structures ELLs may need should be provided with scaffolding processes to allow these students the opportunity to practice the skills they have mastered and improve those that are not at the desired level.

Learning a new language is a real challenge for many ELL students and reading in that language even more. Sousa (2010) explained how the brain learns to read and suggested ways we can apply these findings to helping ELLs learn to read and write English faster and with understanding. Learning is a natural process and “the ability to acquire language appears to be encoded in our genes” (Sousa, 2010, p. 10). The impact vocabulary, interaction, and practice play an important role at the moment of presenting content to ELLs. That is why educators must understand that there are differences in the way male and female brains process language “male

brains tend to process language in the left hemisphere, while most female brains process language in both hemispheres” (Sousa, 2010, p. 11).

How to Assess ELLs

Although the word assessment often intimidates teachers and students, it becomes even more challenging at the moment of assessing ELLs. Prokopchuk (2019) explained that the assessment process is a crucial component of newcomers and ELLs’ success. It has to be a continuous process based on meeting the ELLs’ gaps in the language and guided through all their school life.

There are several factors that need to be addressed at the moment of assessing ELLs and creating strategies to meet their needs. According to Smutny et al. (2012), these factors have to meet required state and national curriculum standards regardless of the ELLs’ level of proficiency. Bilingual educators feel that they have a higher responsibility compared to the rest of their coworkers mainly due to limited time and resources to address, and also the varying levels of proficiency and ability in English language learners Smutny et al. (2012).

There are not ways to serve and fully meet the needs of every student in the classroom while the demand of meeting higher scores is the aim for the school system. That is why, according to Fresch (2014), it is important to assess ELLs with engaging lessons that inspire them. ELLs are influenced by the context, the technology, and digital literacies, so designing classroom instruction and assessments that involve audio, video, and other digital resources to enhance ELL language acquisition will grant each student the opportunity to succeed. Fresch (2014) provided great way of assessing ELLs, and demonstrated the power of teaching lessons

that students enjoy by “acquiring knowledge or skills in ways that cause pleasure and happiness”. (Opitz & Ford, 2014, p. 10).

According to Freeman and Freeman (2002), many educators tend to think that all ELLs are similar, and they all do have the same singular, common need, which is to learn English. But the reality is that although each individual has significant differences in their knowledge, skills, and backgrounds, the educator has to make sure the ELL is engaged and ready to learn. Although by the time the ELLs have all arrived to the United States, many have not received adequate schooling in their native country Freeman and Freeman (2002). For that reason, ELLs must be assessed in different ways to avoid struggling students. The situation gets worse when they have to be assessed following standardized tests in English Freeman and Freeman (2002). It is true that once the student is in a regular classroom, the learning context may help them make important connections between academic areas of knowledge in their first and subsequent languages, but assessing is still an issue. Lachat (2004) complemented the idea by stating that “The focus on standards in federal and state mandates has shifted the emphasis from “access for all” to “high quality learning for all” (p. 5).

Once students have gained access to the essential resources and conditions that support learning and achievement the outcome may change. As explained by Lachat (2004), the solution to assess ELLs is clearly stated and described by understanding who the population is, what their needs are, the characteristics of their background, the variability in their language development, and the teacher preparation. Once these needs are all met, the success during the ELLs’ assessing process will be less traumatic.

Shatz (2010) believed that one of the greatest mistakes is that assessment and instruction are often treated separately. Shatz (2010) demonstrated that assessment and instruction can be

brought closer together by a continuous monitoring throughout the school year to make sure the instruction is adapted or modified to students' ever-changing needs. By creating a home language survey, an initial identification screening, placement, progress monitoring, reclassification and finally assessing for learning and instruction, the assessment process will be meaningful, and the results will show a clear view of the ELL's progress.

Shatz (2010) also explained how educators need to use what ELLs bring to the instructional situation to evaluate their readiness for learning. Everything around the ELL may influence their learning and that awareness mixed with their language/literacy skills can be used to plan and develop a well assessed lesson that allows the ELLs to give their best and to set short- and long-term goals. In the classroom context, Shatz (2010) explained the importance and the urgent need to adjust the teaching-learning strategies to grant the ELLs the necessary support. Shatz (2010) proposed that once educators have adjusted their lessons based upon their observation and evaluation of ELL's response to activities, it would be easier to create lesson to meet individual needs. Also, to if the ELL is motivated and willing to complete the tasks, a more positive scenario will provide more successful outcomes. Since ELLs do not have the same language levels, it is in the teacher's hands to "identify students' varying language levels and needs and determine the degree of support and practice that individual child require" (Shatz, 2010, p. 231).

In the case of beginners or newcomers, Lado (2012) stated that picture books are a flexible resource and well suited to teaching ELLs and assess them since they have a wide range of content that can be applied to a diversity of backgrounds. "The best books are not just readable; they are tellable, as they meet the needs of beginner ELLs" (Lado, 2012 p. 12). Therefore, books need to challenge students but not enough to overwhelm their language

acquisition. That is why picture books are a great fit in an ELL learning environment. Lado (2012) affirmed that once there is motivation and personal connections between the ELL and the book or image used. It is more likely that the mastery of the ability takes place.

Solano (2016) explained and stated the contexts, functions, and uses in the assessment process. Solano (2016) identified assessment as an instrument designed to obtain meaningful information about an ELL to measure if the possession of the knowledge or skills are relevant to the language acquisition process.

Bowman, De Marín, Mahadevan, and Etchells (2016) also agreed and supported the idea that for language acquisition the support of peer tutoring as an instructional strategy is one of the best allies that gives the ELLs the opportunity to help one another, to learn content through repetition of key concepts, and as a support to lose the fear of expressing in front of others.

There are many ways to assess ELLs. One of them is assessing language proficiency which can be a tricky process not only for students, but also for educators Gottlieb (2006). Both can benefit from: Rubrics, charts, checklists, surveys, and other ready-to-use tools available everywhere. Gottlieb (2006) explained that professional development activities are necessary at the moment of teaching standards, language, and content. Those opportunities to identify resources and engaging activities that will work towards the development and expansion of skills and knowledge in the ELLs through conferences, peer work, workshops, and training, among others.

Providing further description on the importance of considering the students' culture and levels of literacy, Boyd-Batstone (2013) introduced the Classroom Assessment of Language Levels (CALL) strategy that educators can use to assess the student's language level and instructional needs. Although it is not a very sophisticated tool, the CALL is a tool designed for

speed and ease of use. “From teacher’s perspectives, rapid assessment is needed in order to begin appropriately differentiated instruction immediately” (Boyd-Batstone, 2013, p. 13). Tools to assess ELLs need to be handy and meet the real-life scenarios that can be challenging and overwhelming.

Soro, Miller, and Lems (2017) used the Language-based Theory of Learning stated by Halliday and Martin (1993) to explain the second-language acquisition as well as its assessment structure. Soro, Miller, and Lems (2017) considered that due to the complexity of the learning process, it was necessary to use the learning language, learning through language, and learning about language triangle as a complement for the assessment of an ELL. The human being can learn a language just by being exposed to it through fun games, playing and building social relationships. Once the ELL is at school, the learning through language, and learning about language can take place and the assessment process may also take place. Although each language has its own grammar structure, the elements of the language are universal and can easily be used to strengthen the ELLs abilities.

Mihai (2010) pointed out that the United States has a language background of ELLs who needed to be assessed differently due to the kind of education they received in their home countries. Some of these ELLs do not even know how to read nor write in their L1, so the assessment process has to involve different structures. So, in some large-scale assessments, the academic performance will be affected, and the results will not be real. For that reason, Mihai (2010) explained that parent-teacher communications might be the first step to ensure the improvement in ELL´s performance. Once parents are involved in their children’s education, the effectiveness of any process has to be immediately seen. Mihai (2010) also added that the socioeconomic status is an element that needs to be addressed because many ELLs are more

likely than other groups to come from low-income families, that will be the case for Hispanic ELLs. Thanks to the No Child Left Behind Act passed in 2002, the scenario for ELLs and their families changed (Mihai, 2010).

Helman, Ittner, and McMaster (2019) described some strategies and scenarios that would benefit ELLs and their language acquisition process. Newcomer programs, Dual Immersion Programs, Primary-Language Literacy instruction, General Education with English Language support, among others can be implemented at the moment of assessing and placing an ELL to ensure their needs are met and the instructional design of the class does not become in an overwhelming situation. Besides those programs, Helman, Ittner, and McMaster (2019) believe that the reading placement is fundamental to develop an accurate process. That is why they considered that for the literacy development the ELLs must be categorized in emergent readers which is the first encounter with the language, the ELL learns the alphabet and plays with the sounds of language Helman, Ittner, and McMaster (2019). Then, the beginning readers are characterized by a significant growth and application of decoding and producing simple text, followed by an attempt to produce and use their phonics knowledge. Transitional readers move along with the rest of the class, but not yet completely proficient. Advancing readers have developed good fluency and their speed in processing information leads them to understand faster Helman, Ittner, and McMaster (2019).

It can be seen that each ELL has different strengths and skills that educators can use to encourage students to learn a language. ELLs need to be assessed differently to guarantee a positive learning process. Language acquisition is a process of time and several stages need to be met in order to get the expected results. It is in the educator's hands to work with the ELL's families to motivate and encourage them to be successful by using different strategies and by

going beyond. Once the learning experience is enjoyable to the ELLs, the meaningful it will be, not leaving aside the student's needs and providing supporting experiences. The teaching-learning process is a teamwork that will make out of the learning experience an unforgettable one.

Chapter 3: Project Design

In this chapter, I explain the rationale for developing a virtual book as a pedagogical mediation that allows fifth-grade students to strengthen the learning process of the four English language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) through social studies class to support the teaching-learning processes of the English language. In my observations and conversations, I have noted that ESL teachers need more materials that meet the standards proposed in North Carolina.

In my classroom, I noticed that students are interested when technology is integrated into the educational process. Therefore, I wanted to integrate technology into the teaching processes related to learning English language skills and the applicability in the area of social studies. This new and attractive tool allows ELLs to have a better command of the second language, so I decided to design the interactive virtual book.

The application of the interactive virtual book I created will allow students to have more interactive, responsible, and meaningful learning, so the level of participation and motivation in classes will reach 100%. The different activities that enrich the book make the subject content more understandable, attractive, and easy to work with, notably improving the evaluation process, as well.

A benefit of this virtual book is to strengthen students' English proficiency. The improvement of the levels of communicative competence in English offers opportunities for each one of the students to recognize other cultures and to attain individual and collective growth. The

recognition of the importance of a foreign language, in this case, English, was a reason to improve the quality of the teaching of English and social studies for ELLs. My goal for the virtual book is to strengthen the learning of English in terms of speaking, listening, writing, and reading of fifth-grade students as well as the subject of social studies required by the state of North Carolina.

Albers and Martinez (2015) stated that success in acquiring a second language is closely linked to the way it is taught, reflecting in the students, good or bad experiences that leads to the pleasure of learning that language. As a result of insights gained through the literature review, this tool will be implemented to help in the process allowing ELLs to understand, improve, and correct the use of English in their daily lives. Taking into account that technology has become an important tool for knowledge, and skills acquisition processes, this virtual book has been developed in a flexible, practical, dynamic, and motivating way for students.

When people want to learn English or any other language effectively, it is necessary to develop the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The development of these skills does not occur separately, but depends on each skill. Listening for comprehension in English is essential for learning and communicating accurately. In ELLs, this ability can be improved when they carry out activities, such as listening to dialogues, readings, songs, and conversations. Speaking English actively allows ELLs to form sentences and become familiar with expressions. Having a large vocabulary helps communication; therefore, the use and understanding of the language is more efficient and accurate. Writing in English is very important when learning English. It allows ELLs to convey ideas in an orderly and concrete way. When activities, such as writing paragraphs or simple texts, are practiced with students in English, it helps them to distinguish grammar, language structure, and enriches their vocabulary,

which will allow them to associate words and phrases that will be useful in verbal communication. Reading in English provides the ELLs with a better perception of the language and at the same time allows them to improve their writing and pronunciation as well as expanding their vocabulary, allowing them to have a more complete oral and written communication.

The virtual book I created is designed for students to work and produce individually in the activities proposed in the social studies class and learning English at the same time. The text is enriched with multimedia content, a resource that is very attractive for children and young people, especially if their communicative competence in English is developing. This virtual book allows the teacher to add interactive multimedia applications executable on any computer, regardless of whether this program is installed on it. It contains software that can be downloaded freely over the internet or on a USB. It offers a wide variety of interactive resources to facilitate learning, reinforce and extend content, and motivate learners.

The concept of an interactive virtual book has evolved with the internet and with the appearance of new technological devices. Therefore, this is a project that combines digital technology with relevant content, smart programming, and strong partnerships, to achieve an impact on the student and guide them in their learning process. It is then that this virtual book helps to reflect a change in attitude towards technology as well as taking advantage of these resources to educate, entertain, and achieve the objective of enhancing knowledge in students, making them competent, capable of generating useful knowledge that is part of innovative pedagogical processes, promoting the transformation of social reality, all starting from the implementation of a virtual book. This is a great opportunity to use this virtual book as a didactic

resource to stimulate the teaching and learning processes, with real images, transversal texts, and exercises to strengthen basic skills, work autonomy, interaction, and collaborative work.

Teachers often face challenges, such as, being able to hold students' attention, seeking more striking ways to enhance knowledge and meaningful learning in students that take their interests into account. This virtual book helps, not only teachers, but also ELLs, reflect on a change of attitude, and take advantage of technological resources to educate, entertain, and achieve the objective of strengthening knowledge.

Chapter 4: The Project

This virtual book focuses on the Dual Language Immersion program and those ELLs that need to not only learn the language but also to be successful in the Social Studies class in North Carolina public schools. It is expected that the teaching/learning of foreign languages in North Carolina's public schools will become easier and more effective for those new users of the language.

In addition, the virtual book aims to raise awareness of different instructional methods and assignments to allow English language learners to become successful, and the effectiveness of the process as a pedagogical alternative for English language acquisition.

When the application of the social studies digital book “5th-grade social studies” is opened, the first screen that appears is the one with the table of contents on the left side and a brief presentation of the class. It has many colors to make it eye-catching to the students. As you scroll down a few pictures of the first lesson are available to help the user understand the topic better through images. The user may click on the images and a short paragraph with a description of the image will be seen as well as a short video explaining the topic. The videos can be also shared with a direct link to YouTube.

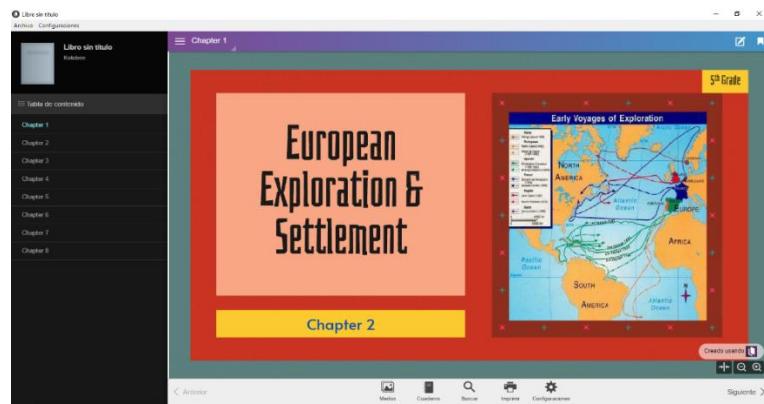


Figure 4.1: Presentation

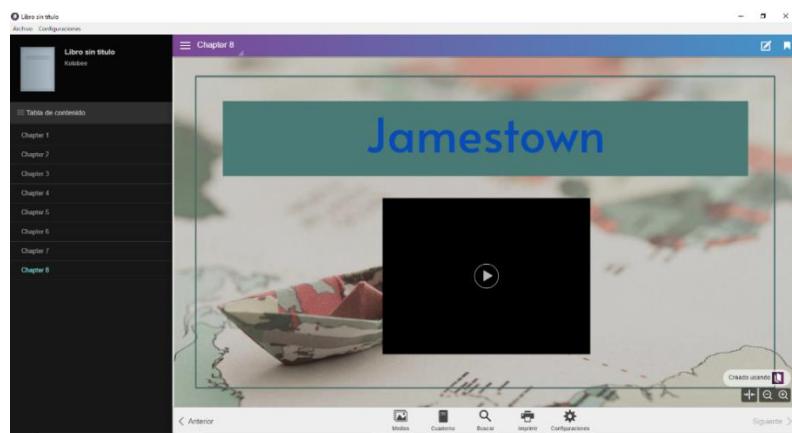


Figure 4.2: Video options

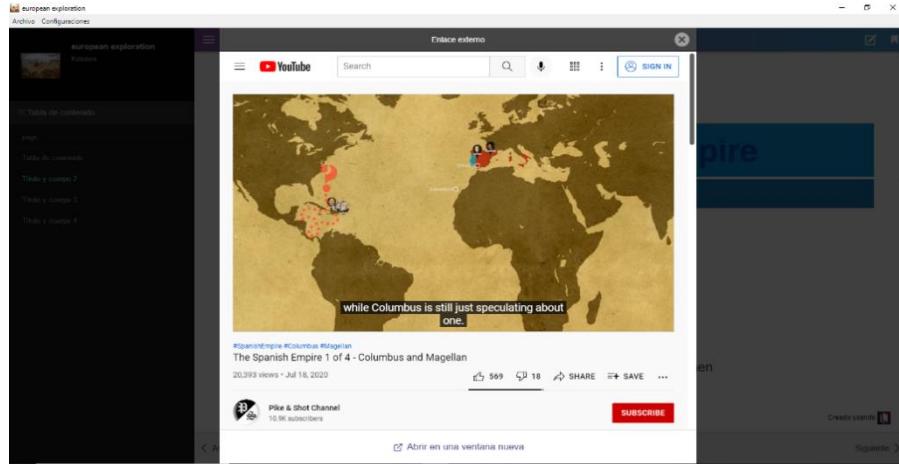


Figure 4.3: Direct link to YouTube videos

The title and description of the first chapter are described with a map, to allow students to locate themselves and get a better understanding of where the topic took place. The students may click on the map and it will zoom in, so that the details can be easily observed.

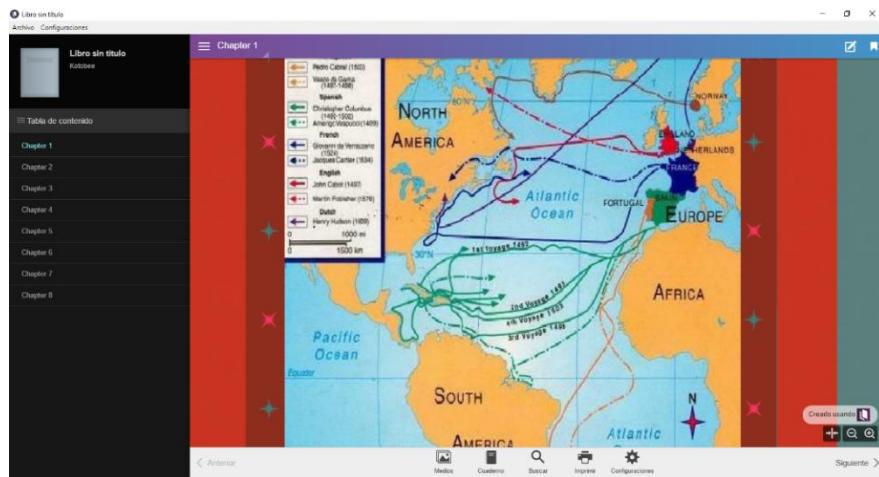


Figure 4.4: Zoom in maps for detailed information

There is also a section of terms and vocabulary, that will have not only the description of the word but also an image that will help the students understand it better.

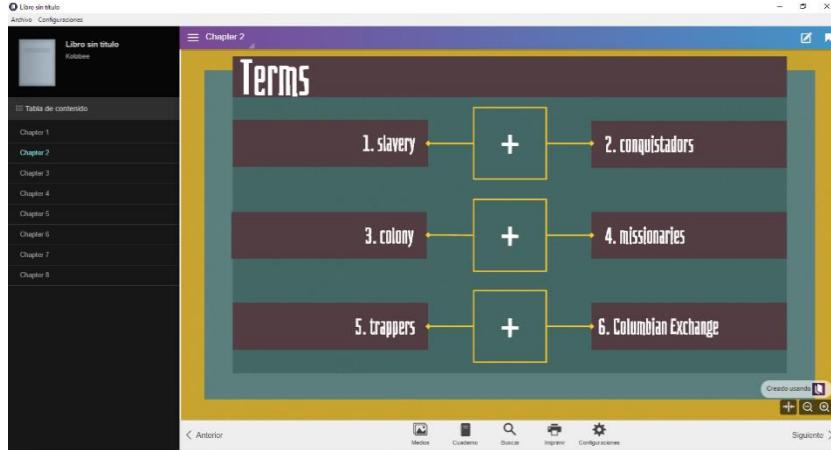


Figure 4.5 Vocabulary

The students will also have the option to see drag and drop assignments that can help them practice the content seen in class. Each chapter has a different assignment based on the different skills the students need to master.



Figure 4.6: Drag and drop activities

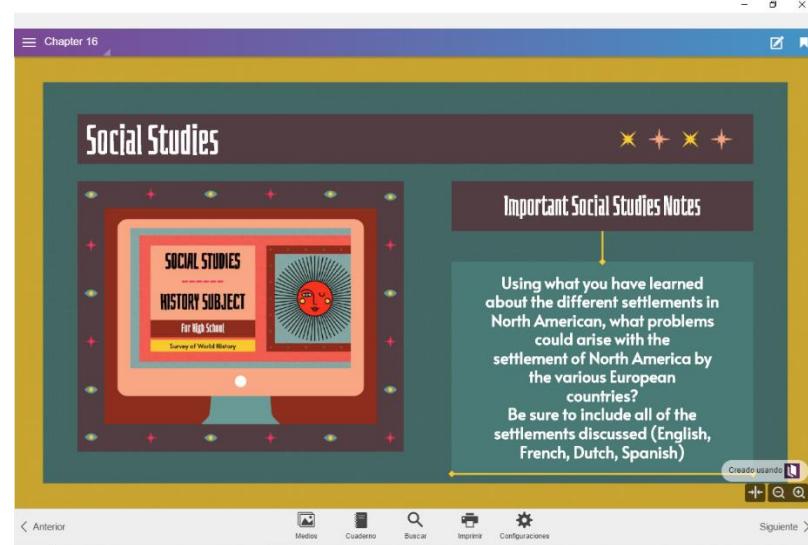


Figure 4.7: Assignments that allow students to practice

The content follows a timeline easy to understand and full of images and short explanations that motivate, and engage students.

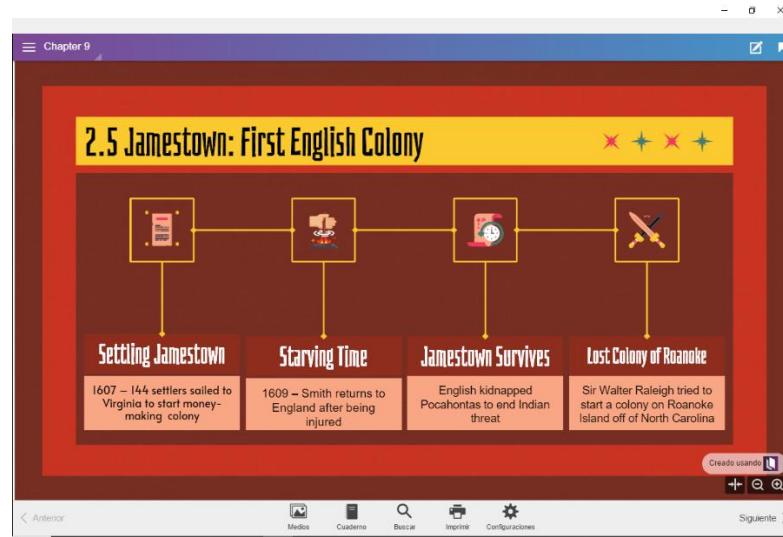
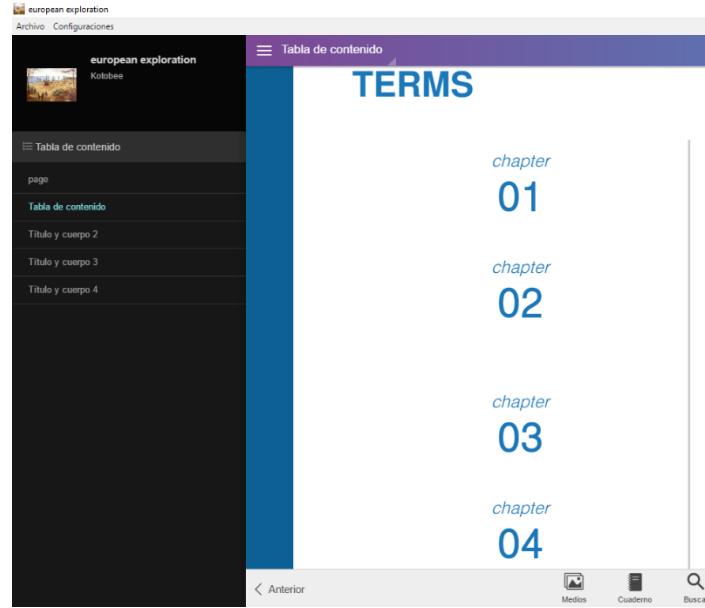


Figure 4.8: Timeline content



Figure 4.9: Images with short explanations

The book shows in a list the thematic units to be worked on. Each one highlights as you click on them to show the selected option. All lessons deal with the four basic English skills with practical exercises. To access them, the user can click on the name of the unit or advance successively through the navigation buttons found at the bottom of each page.



4.10: Thematic units and chapters

The development of the content of each lesson is enriched with images, sound, text, and video allowing the user a complete use of the four basic skills.

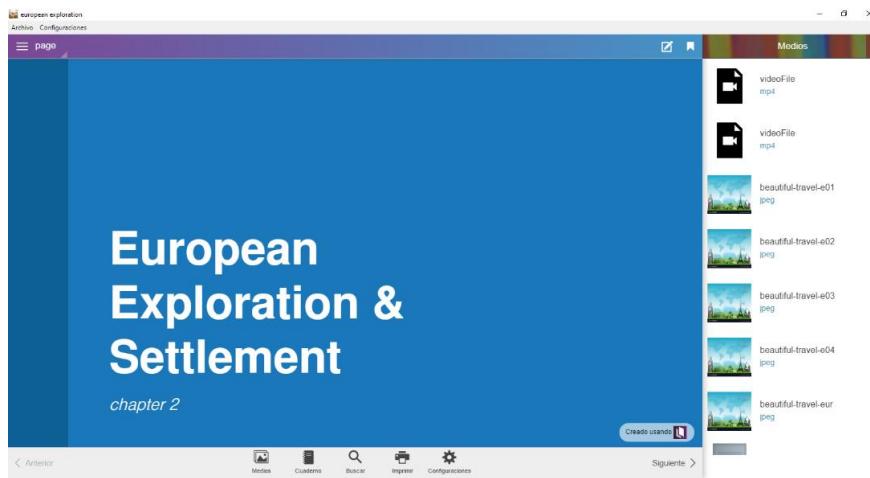
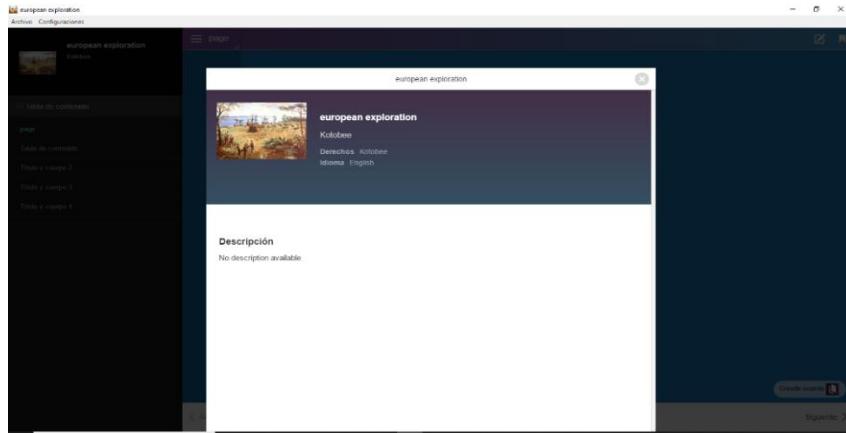


Figure 4.11: Images, and videos related to the topic

By clicking on the book's cover located on the left top corner, the user will be able to see a brief description of the book and any notes or comments left by the instructor. The purpose of it is to allow the user to see and not miss any relevant information or instruction on how to use the book



4.12: Class description option

At the top, there is a small toolbar with three different options, the table of contents with more detailed information, an “add a note” option to allow the user to create their own notes, and the bookmark icon to make sure the user can pick up where he left the last time the book was used. The instructions on how to create or add a note is given in Spanish to allow the students to understand better how the process is and the steps to create it.

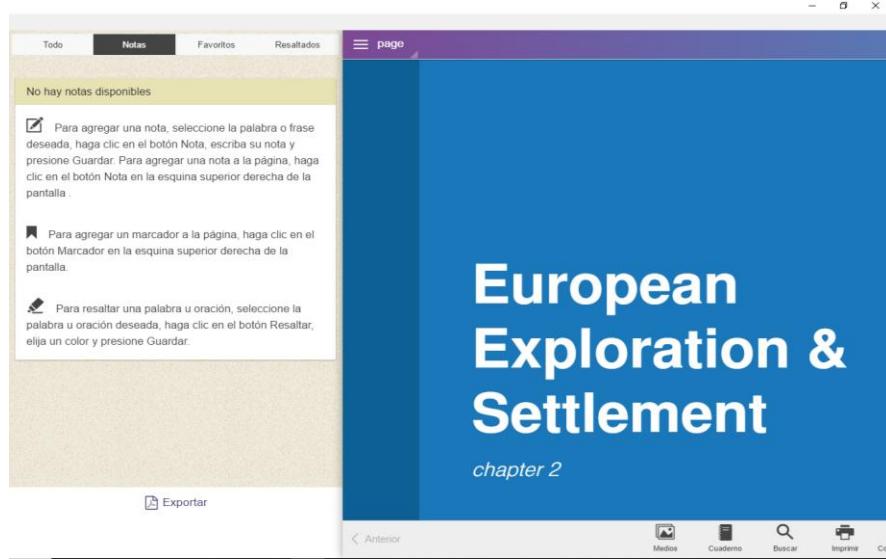


Figure 4.13: Option to allow the user to create their own notes, and the bookmark icon

At the bottom of the page the user will be able to find several options such as “media”, which lets the user see only images used throughout the lesson. A “notebook” icon allows the user to add personal notes regarding the reading. The ‘settings’ icon changes page size and the way the user wants to see the page.

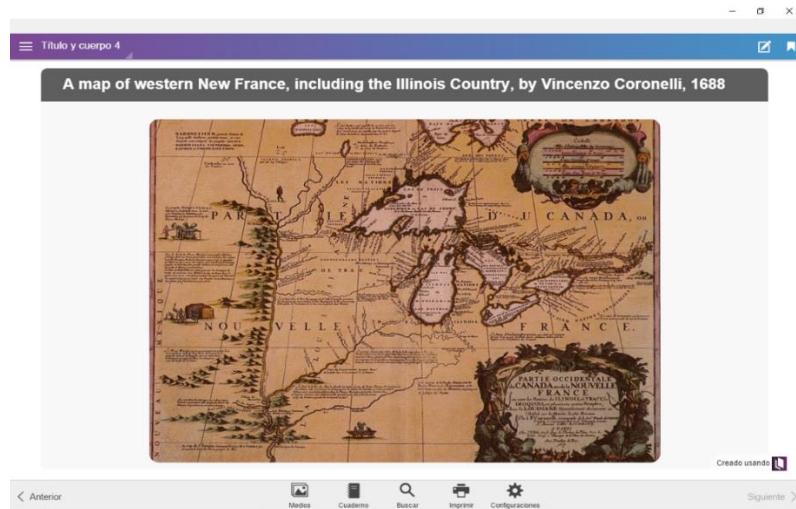


Figure 4.14: Settings, print and other options located at the bottom of each page

Page with audio and video content in which the user can work on an activity to improve and expose themself to the language. The videos are easy to follow and understand.

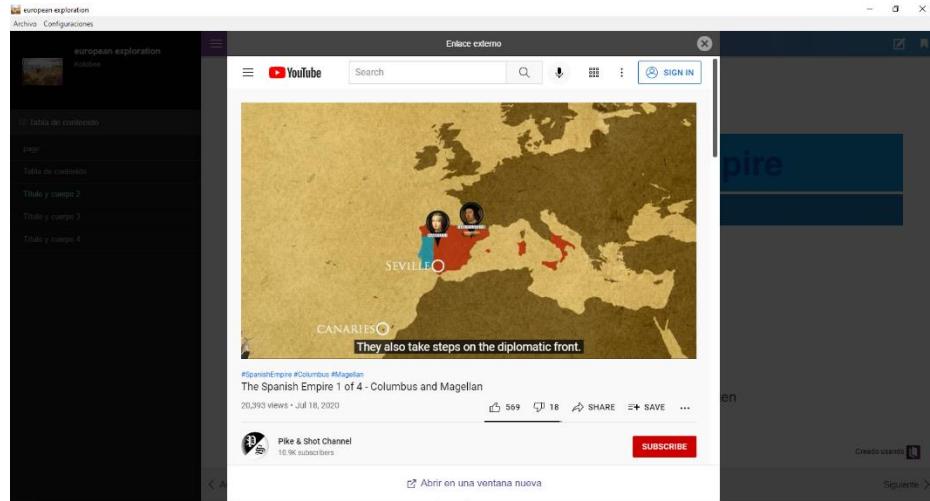


Figure 4.15: Video options from YouTube

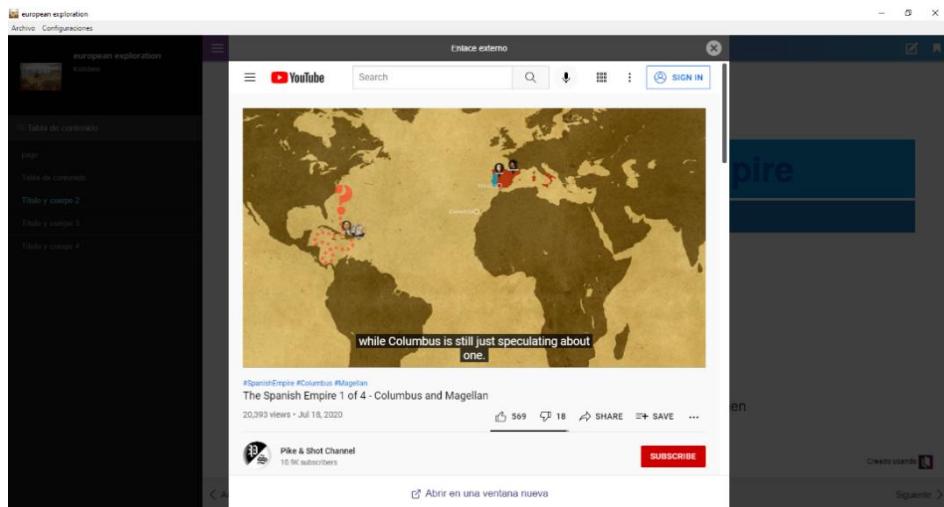


Figure 4.16: Videos posted by the teacher from a YouTube account

At the end of each chapter, there is an empty space that students can use to take their notes and even record themselves explaining or sharing information with the teacher.



Figure 4.17: Place at the end of each chapter in which students can take notes

A screenshot of a digital quiz application window titled "Chapter 18". It displays two questions side-by-side. Question 1 asks: "Europeans began to explore the Americas following which event?" with options: Norse landing in North America, Native American migration from Asia, Columbus' 1st voyage and "discovery" of the New World, and The Crusades. Question 2 asks: "Spanish conquerors were known as" with options: Matadors, Conquistadors, Vaqueros, and Guerillas. Both questions have "Enviar respuestas" and "Limpiar respuestas" buttons. The background features a stylized world map with yellow continents and blue oceans. The bottom navigation bar includes icons for Media, Notebook, Search, and Settings.

Figure 4.18: Test your student's knowledge

There is also an option that has a quiz to test student's knowledge and check for understanding. This option also translates the question and possible answer in Spanish to help the student understand better what is being asked.



Figure 4.19: Translation of question and answer for students to understand better.

Using an external link, it is possible to use vocabulary games that can be related to the topic or to any content in general. In this case it is related to general vocabulary.

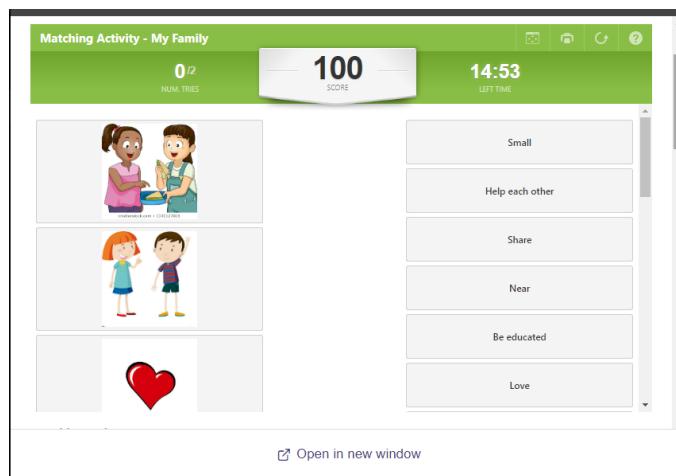


Figure 4.20: Vocabulary games

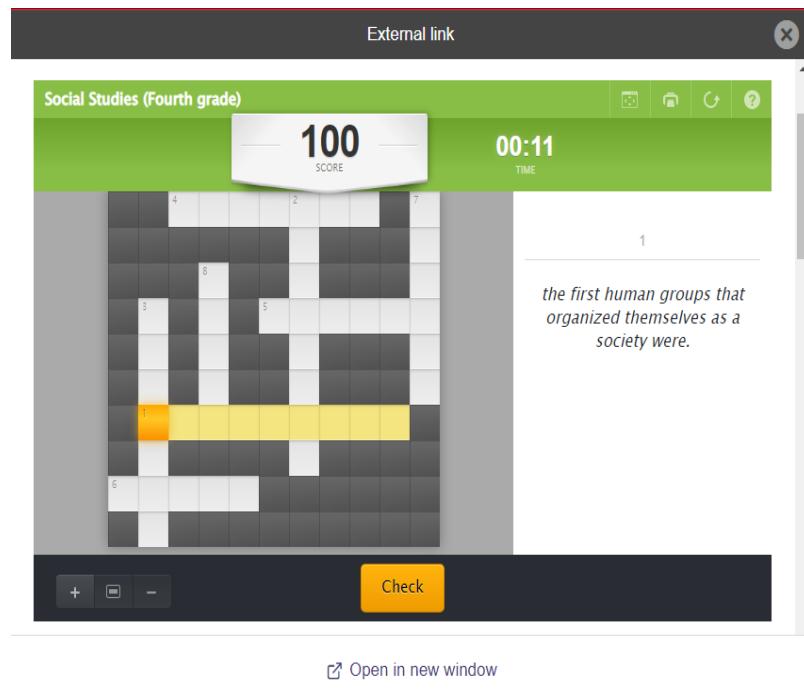


Figure 4.21: Didactic games such as word puzzles

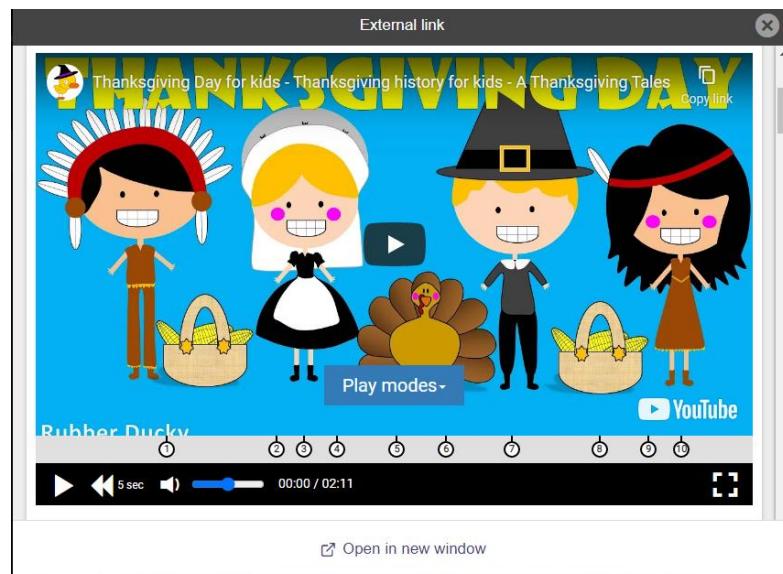


Figure 4.22: Interactive videos with questions

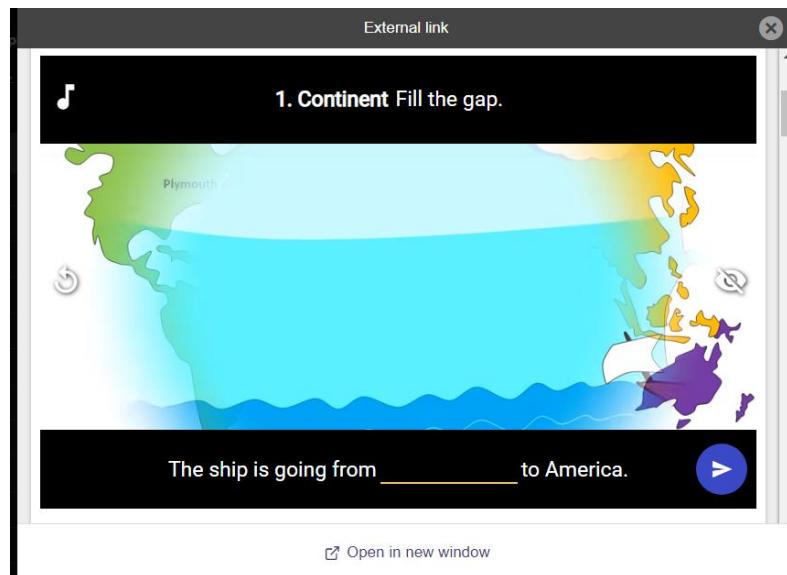


Figure 4.23: Interactive videos with questions

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The teaching of English through tools such as virtual books comprises an enriching experience for both students and teachers, and helps improve learning and teaching strategies. It is also a successful way to change the way of presenting and directing the students' learning processes. The virtual book I created offers the possibility to construct learning related to real life examples and experiences, incorporating everyday knowledge to transform it into sources of deeper, more general and meaningful learning, while guiding students to be more thoughtful, investigative and determined.

The use of this tool allows the appropriation of knowledge, looking straight ahead at the foreign language vocabulary, intonation, text format, and, above all, the communicative success. It allows work in different ways to assess ELLs in a step-by-step meaningful production achieving increasingly complex tasks. The way ELLs see the language and the learning process will become positive; and the joy of discovering other cultures, other countries, other authors from their own possibilities with security and satisfaction will grant them the opportunity for success.

The use of these tools is appropriate for the acquisition of concepts and the development of language skills by emphasizing the processing of information when it is present in multiple ways, either visual, auditory, or tactile. It is important to recognize the work of the teacher as an agent of change in the processes training and transformation of education today, especially since

it is the educator who contributes to educational practice with the use of various tools that allow the acquisition of knowledge in a didactic and fun way for the students.

This virtual book shows the importance of teaching English through the use of tools that can be implemented in other areas of knowledge, allowing the teacher and students to be participants in an innovative and motivating education. Improving the levels of motivation in students is a key factor, therefore, allowing them to improve their participation, interest, responsibility, and commitment to learning English has to be the aim for each class. Strategies such as cooperative work, research, linking learning to the personal context of students, and evaluation as a process of improvement will significantly promote the motivation of students. This motivation will improve participation, attitude, and interest in class, and it will also help to acquire the language in a better way.

Technology tools, among others make it easier to design interactive and multimedia activities that generate new ways of learning and of interacting with knowledge. Regarding the didactic part of the virtual book, several things need to be taken into account at the moment of sharing information with ELLs. Since colors, drawings, and animations are very attractive for children, it is fundamental that any information, if possible, needs to be presented that way. Primers, songs, and videos in English will also give the teacher an invaluable opportunity to integrate and build a new proposal more contextualized and according to the needs of each ELL.

A large number of resources were used to compile the didactic design of this virtual book, with the purpose of facilitating the pedagogical work and structuring learning units. Since in the classroom, the role of the teacher becomes more in character- one of guide, of counselor, of supervisor, all to help students to achieve the objectives, it is important to provide clear and well-structured lessons with activities related and integrated into other areas of knowledge and

students' experiences, making learning more meaningful with new cognitive structures. Although this didactic proposal is intended to strengthen the learning of English, it transcends the goal and allows the ELL to strengthen communicative skills in English as a foreign language.

Finally, teachers are determining agents when improving learning environments, offering alternatives to facilitate access to knowledge and adopting new roles for teaching, using technological tools such as the virtual books, to cover the curriculum, allowing content to be easily integrated, making a big impact in the teaching-learning process.

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